

CAPE BRETON: A FIELD FOR ENTERPRISE.

A Lecture recently delivered by
JOHN L. MACDOUGALL, BARRISTER.

Strathclyde
1898

ANTIGONISH, N. S. :
The Casket Printing and Publishing Company, Limited
1898.

MOUNT ALLISON
UNIVERSITY
RALPH PICKARD BELL LIBRARY



11c

117

N6

M3

Bell

248514

CAPE BRETON

AS

A Field for Enterprise.

(SUPPLEMENT TO THE GASKET.)

CAPE BRETON ISLAND is the easternmost section of the Dominion of Canada. This should not be news to-day in any part of the English-speaking world. But the place is so exclusive, so distant, so meditative, and so much alone that busy outsiders can almost be excused for not knowing very much about it. It is not so very long since an English Prime Minister was, it is said, fairly taken sick with surprise when the fact was borne in upon him that Cape Breton was "an Island." The charming innocence of the English statesman (?) in respect of the geography of the western world finds its counterpart in the nonchalant assurance of the glorious French King who, in a formal State paper, described the vast region which now constitutes the wide Dominion of Canada as "a few acres of snow."

That Cape Breton is not better known in the great centres of light and progress is due, I fear, in a large measure, to our own negligence. We are not sufficiently persevering in giving proper publicity to our splendid insular heritage. Nature has been kind to us, but I am not very sure that we have been just to Nature. What this place wants above all things is capital, and in this feverish, work-a-day world of our time, capital is coy, and must be coaxed. At all events we ourselves—sons of the sod—should always be concerned in pointing out to capital any reasonable inducements we have to offer. We should lose no legitimate opportunity to impress on the outside world the natural treasures, the rich resources, the industrial potentialities, the capabilities for development, and the room for growth and investment which our Island home possesses. We have always been too reticent; too timid altogether. Our case is an illustration of modesty run into sin. In all our portraiture of what we are and have,

however, there is one thing which we should be ever careful to observe, namely, honesty and accuracy of representation. "Tell the truth and shame the devil." Nothing is to be gained, but much may be lost by our indulging in the fairy tales and "frauds of fancy," with which some sharp speculators delight to beguile their dupes.

Cape Breton, then, is an Island — an old Island with an interesting history — but in many important respects it is away behind nearly all the other old-inhabited sections of British North America. It is built much after the pattern of the old traditional giants so fascinating in fight and fable, with the head bathing in the swift-flowing waters of the Strait of Canso, and the feet projecting in menacing attitude into the rocky reefs of Cape North, as if to kick back the rolling swell of the great Atlantic. It measures about 120 miles from head to foot, and some seventy-five miles across the shoulders. Its population in 1891 was 86,854 souls, distributed as follows: Inverness County, 25,779; Victoria County, 12,432; Cape Breton County, 34,244; and Richmond County, 14,399. These people viewed merely as instruments for work — whether for earth or heaven — cannot be excelled on this continent. They are strong, healthy, honest, moral, and deeply religious. They can eat anything, and do anything, consistent with the dignity of man and the English Constitution.

Since the treaty of Paris, in 1763, Cape Breton Island has been British territory, and for the last three-quarters of a century an integral part of the Province of Nova Scotia. During the struggle between France and England over the North American Provinces, Cape Breton changed owners several times. By the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, Nova Scotia was ceded to Great Britain, but Cape Breton was retained by France. On the southern side of the Island, which was then called Isle Royal, the French built a town called, in honor of Louis of France, Louisbourg. This town was so strong and well protected that it was said to resemble Dunkirk in France, and was therefore designated the Dunkirk of America. In 1745 Governor Shirley of Massachusetts conceived the idea of taking this place from the French. A fleet was sent out for this purpose under the command of William Pepperell, who was assisted and reinforced by Commodore Warren with several British men-of-war. After a hard siege Louisbourg fell. In 1748 Cape Breton was again restored to France by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and a French colony

This is one of the best of the Cape Breton people. They are strong, healthy, honest, moral, and deeply religious. They can eat anything, and do anything, consistent with the dignity of man and the English Constitution.

it then continued until the second siege of Louisburg in 1758. This second siege of Louisburg was followed up by similar British attacks on Frontenac, Fort Du Quesne, and Quebec, and in 1763, as already stated, a final period was put to French dominion in Canada, and Cape Breton, with the rest of the country, fell permanently into the lap of mother England. I mention these few facts of history merely to show that, more than a century ago, two of the most advanced nations of the earth have written in blood their testimony of Cape Breton's importance.

About the end of the last and the beginning of the present century a stream of Scottish immigrants struck the shores of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton. They came from the Islands and Highlands of Scotland — fugitives, many of them, from the cruelty and persecution which followed the downfall of the Stuart cause. The vast majority of our people to-day are descendants of those expatriated Scotchmen who, in many respects, made excellent pioneer settlers. They were stout-hearted men of fine physique, possessing remarkable courage and powers of endurance — meet qualities for men making a home in the howling wilderness. They feared nothing but God, and hoped for nothing but an honest living, and a happy death. Skilled or ambitious tillers of the soil they were not. It contented them to sit under their own fig-tree, with "their hoddin' gray and hamely fare," and owe no man. The land then possessed all its virgin vigor, the crops grew remarkably, the harvest of the sea was neverfailing, the wants of the settlers were comparatively few, and it required but ordinary handwork, with little or no headwork, to ensure a sufficiency for frugal, unambitious, living. And being easily satisfied, those good old people "never changed nor wished to change" their state. Later generations, even unto the present, have followed their ultra-conservative and crude methods with only too strict fidelity. This is the first cause of the backward condition of agriculture in Cape Breton. We need new blood. Our farmers have been too long wedded to the past. They must learn to live in the new light; they must rise to business and scientific principles if they expect to prosper. We have a first-class food-producing country. River Inhabitants, River Dennis, the Mabous, the Margarees, Broad Cove, Cheticamp, Whycocomagh, Middle River, and McKinnon's Intervale are all superior farming districts. And these are but a few of the fertile agricultural tracts of the Island. The river districts

This is our dangerous
the Negro question of Cape Breton

are splendidly adapted to the raising of beef cattle, the mountain districts to the rising of sheep, and the table-lands to dairying; whilst the most of the whole country is prepared to yield, under proper treatment, bountiful grain, root, and vegetable crops. But we must "put off the old man;" we must adopt ourselves to the present and cease to hang on the past, even though the doing so may, as no doubt it will, require us to "pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow."

Another cause of the comparatively weak condition of husbandry here is, that the growing intelligence of the country is withdrawn or diverted from farming, as a calling. This is little short of criminal, for, despite our other various and valuable pursuits and possible avocations, farming is, and was, and ever will be, the chief industry of our people. It is therefore entitled to the best thought and training of our sons and daughters. But what do we find? As soon as our boys and girls get hold of a little schooling, particularly if they show any signs of smartness, they are advised and encouraged, even by the parents, to aim at some walk of life other than the calling of their fathers. They are taught to regard farming as ignoble drudgery — something incompatible with a clever, cultivated mind. The "hard work" of a farmer is held *in terrorum* over these young minds, and they are deluded into the belief that "hard work" can be avoided if they follow some other pursuit. True enough, farming entails hard work; but so does every other line of human activity. Industry — a high order of industry — is necessary to success in every station of man without exception. But what gives life, and soul, and permanent value to industry, on the farm or elsewhere, *is the brain you put in it*. And I can think of no occupation which demands and deserves more brain patronage than does the noble and natural avocation of tilling the soil. Our farmers must therefore understand that it is not the illiterate, not the dunces, but the brightest and best of the family that should be kept on the farm.

And still another reason for the unsatisfactory general progress of our farmers. Our children do not stay with us. We are short of laborers. The greatest number and best quality of our working people are giving their services, and many of them their lives, to the upbuilding of other countries. If all the hard labor which our able-bodied young men and women are compelled to perform for foreigners was put upon our farms for five years, the whole face of the Island would be changed beyond recognition.

In that event our young friends would be bettering their own condition and ours. If these young people would work half as hard at home as they must work abroad, the reason for their leaving home would soon disappear. I want our young folk to give the benefit of their hands, their hearts and their heads to their native heath. I want them to think more of ourselves than of any other people in the world. I want them to cultivate a love for Cape Breton such as cannot be given to any other country under the sun. I want them to have faith in Cape Breton, faith in its resources, faith in its future, faith in themselves. I urge these views not because I wish our men to be sectional or narrow-minded. On the the contrary, I desire them to be resident and reliable citizens of the State, always broad-minded and patriotic. But the true patriotism, like charity, begins at home. He serves his country most who serves his home best.

What can be done to keep these young people at home? That question is large enough in itself for an interesting lecture. I ask it here merely to set our people thinking on it. On the instant one plan occurs to me which might be of practical utility. Our people should form themselves into certain organizations. The solution of this difficult problem obviously needs an organized effort. Let the men in the various sections of the Island combine into industrial associations. For instance, in farming communities 40 or 50 farmers could join in company to promote draining, fertilizing, the importation of seed and stock and improved methods generally. Each could subscribe \$10 or \$20 to the project, and all would have a common interest and a common ambition therein. In lumber districts a similar organization might be formed to buy saw mills, cut and haul timber, and put the lumber upon the markets. In fishing districts which are usually more densely peopled, 100 men or more could combine to build boats for deep sea or shore fishery, and provide the necessary gear and equipments. In this way many of our young men could find employment at home, and the general condition would soon change for the better. Our women, too, would do well to organize in like manner. In this country our women do a great many things which they should not be required to do. They make all our bread and butter. Organizations among them looking, for instance, to improved modes of baking, cooking and butter-making, could but have good results. A great deal of people's character is formed by the "bread and butter they use."

What attractions have we to offer to outside men and money? The first and most pleasant attraction we possess can be seen in our faces—we are good-looking. This means much. Our people as a whole are hearty, honest, good-living, and proverbially hospitable. There is not, I think, in the wide world a piece of ground of the same size and population more singularly free from vice than is the Island of Cape Breton. Nowhere are the life and property of a stranger more safe. Ours is a Christian community. Though our isolated position has hitherto deprived us of many of the lights of modern thought and progressive society, yet, we have our compensation in the fact that we have long enjoyed and appreciated the saving light of Christ's gospel.

Probably the first feature of this place which would impress strangers, particularly Americans of means and leisure, is its eminent adaptability to the purposes of summer resorts. In mid-summer the natural scenery here is unsurpassable, and the air is so pure and good that it seems to come direct from Paradise. You must come here to appreciate this. Come in the leafy month of June, when the fields and the forests are robed in their gorgeous mantle of green; when the birds begin to sing, and the brooks begin to babble; when mountain speaks to mountain, and even the crags and peaks hold grateful converse in returning light; when the hills and the dales and the meadows are subduedly breathing forth the powers and the praises of a glorious First Cause; when the glinting waters of our limpid lakes reflect as nothing else can the born beauty of their bonnie borders—come at such a time, and if you do not enjoy and admire what you see, 'tis because your soul rejects the divine afflatus of Nature's lofty inspirations! The beautiful *Bras d'Ors*, which literally divide the Island into two parts, and which, in point of scenic charms, rival, if not outrival, the historic lakes of Killarney, could be encircled with the summer residences of wealthy foreigners. So could lovely Lake Ainslie, Whycocomagh Bay, West Bay, and East Bay. Along the coast, too, there are numerous harbors, bays, and beaches that could be developed into delightful watering places. Americans of means and leisure could come here by land, or in their yachts, and spend the summer in most wholesome enjoyment at comparatively small cost. They could come on their bicycles, for that matter. Just think what a relief it would be to them to escape the preliminary and accompanying *furor* of an ocean voyage! None of the bewildering preparations, the plague of packing, the racket of

trunks, the rush for tickets, the continued fatigue, the seasickness, and the deep-rooted swearing incidental to a European trip. Here in the virtuous retreats of Cape Breton, whither they can come without any worrying ceremonies, they can find rest, health, freedom and fun — all the fun that is good for them. Here all varieties of out-door recreation are conveniently at hand, such as boating, bathing, angling, gunning, driving or any of the manly sports. It was only since the C. B. Railway was built eight or nine years ago that Cape Breton was properly discovered by tourists and travellers. Henceforth their volume will increase rapidly from year to year. A syndicate of American gentlemen that would build and provide suitable summer residences and hotels at commanding points on this Island would, in my opinion, be supplying a telling want, at a large profit.

Our fisheries rank among the finest in the world. The waters all around us, inland and coastal, are teeming with numerous kinds of food fish. Our lakes and large rivers abound in game-fish, such as trout and salmon, and a boundless quantity of cod, haddock, halibut, herring, mackerel, lobsters and alewives, fills our coastal waters. If a fair fishery treaty could be effected by and between this country and the United States it would, in my humble judgment, be a tremendous advantage to both nations. And that not merely from a commercial, but also from an international viewpoint. Had there always been such a compact a great many of the irritating claims and questions which we have recently witnessed would be well spared, to the great credit of both of us. The two countries can never be one, either politically or commercially; but it is in the highest interests of both that they should be invariably good friends and neighbors. It is exceedingly to be regretted that the various offers of reciprocity which Canada made to the United States should have been declined by the latter country, and it is equally to be hoped that more generous counsels may yet prevail at Washington. But in any case, I cannot help thinking that our invaluable fisheries constitute an admirable invitation to American capital: aye, more, they may constitute the basis of peace and goodwill for ever between the two noble families of the English-speaking race on this continent!

Even the woods of Cape Breton are sadly sighing for commercial society. We have no sky-piercing pines or cedars, but we are actually covered with spruce. Hardwood is likewise abundant and of various kinds, such as maple, birch, beech,

ash, and some oak. Some large tracts of well-timbered Crown-land in the interior of the country are yet unpeopled and ungranted. We have also a very considerable quantity of juniper which would seem to be easily marketed for ships' knees, railway ties, and such uses. There are excellent possibilities here for pulp-mills, saw-mills, peg-factories, last-factories, furniture-factories, and various other forms of wood manufactures. Who will come and convert these latent possibilities into living agencies of progress and of happiness?

But probably our greatest inducement to foreign capital lies in our mines and minerals. We have gold, silver, lead, copper, galena, coal, and coal-oil. We have also a few good free-stone quarries, fire clay, soapstone, gypsum, limestone, and some fine deposits of marble. Iron-ore in immense quantity is found around Whycomagh, and, being near a number of collieries, all the natural requisites for successful smelting-works are present there. The existence of gold in promising quantity has been established beyond a doubt at Whycomagh, Middle River, and Cheticamp. I am not a mining expert and do not wish to say anything with regard to those gold mines that would mislead the public or strangers who wish to invest money in such ventures. All that I can say positively is that the discovery of gold at those three points is just as genuine and certain as in Klondyke, and all that I ask is that men of enterprise and capital should come and see. The deposit of galena at Cheticamp is one of immense size, and also, I am informed, one of rare value. A gentleman from Montana who has had large experience in the mines of that and other states, and who had made careful personal inspection of the Cheticamp find, told me in my own office it was the finest property of the kind he ever saw, and the easiest to operate. The lime and marble quarry at Marble Mountain, on the shores of West Bay, is also an exceedingly valuable property. This has been considerably developed for years, to the great advantage of that interesting section of the country. But the quality and capacity of the quarry are such as offer a special bid to much additional force. The gypsum at Grandique, Mabou, and other points has been well introduced into the commercial world, and bids fair to become an important factor in our potential wealth. The oil wells at West Lake Ainslie have been "hanging fire" for some years. A number of American gentlemen of fair repute have recently renewed operations there. Derricks have been built, engines bought, and extensive prepara-

tions for boring are being made. Our earnest wish for those plucky speculators is that they may, in the richest sense of the expression, "strike oil." And if they do, the classic banks of elegant Ainslie will become, on this Island, the grand illuminating centre of the fates that are to be.

Of all our vast variety of minerals coal alone has been to any large extent developed. On the southern or Sydney side of the Island quite a number of collieries have been in operation for several decades. These have enlisted both British and American capital and have thoroughly demonstrated the wisdom of its investment. A few years since a strong corporation, commonly called "the Whitney syndicate," bought the major portion of those mines, and has since been working them with increased force and improved appliances. Under this fresh stimulus the output of coal has increased, and will likely continue to increase rapidly on that side of the Island. Mr. Whitney (and his successors) will control the coal destinies of that side of Cape Breton for the next century. He therefore becomes a striking personage in our history. I was of those who always believed that the Government of Nova Scotia made a most improvident and perilous deal with the Dominion Coal Company. I felt that it was unwise to tie up, for one hundred years and more, in the hands of a soulless body of foreigners, so much of our provincial producing power. But the "deal" has been effected and, whether wise or unwise, we have now no alternative but to accept it. I think now that it is the duty of every man in Cape Breton to render every possible help, and no hindrance, to Mr. Whitney in the proper prosecution of his huge enterprise. We must recognize in him the right to manage his own affairs, even if it is not done to our liking. He is the master in his own house and, so long as he keeps within his legal latitudes, we have no title to dictate to him. It is Mr. Whitney's interests and ours to make his property as productive as possible. To this end it may be necessary for him at times to concentrate his forces to the disappointment and probable loss of particular localities. But if the general interests are served by this massing of energy, the claims of individual sections should yield to the greater claims of the public good. There may be, however, such a thing as using our people wrongly, in which case we must never hesitate to stand upon our rights, no matter who invades them. I am very sure Mr. Whitney is too knowing a man not to realize that, in this as in his own country, men have certain rights which cannot be transferred on paper.

There are good shipping facilities on this southern side of the Island. The harbors of Sydney, Arichat and Louisburg are all capital harbors. The last named is one of the best in the Maritime Provinces, and is open all the year round. It is inconceivable that so magnificent a natural port was intended for mean destiny, and it is no wild hope to entertain that it may become the favorite winter port of Canada. When the Newfoundland railway begins to run with full power; when fast and regular steam communication is established between the British Isles and "the ancient colony," and between the latter and Cape Breton; when the trade currents of the two Islands begin to flow freely and naturally into each other; we can expect to see rising rapidly to their appropriate ranks among the loyal outposts of Great or Greater Britain these two devoted sentinels of the mighty Saint Lawrence.

The Northwestern or Inverness side of Cape Breton is just as rich in mineral deposits as is the southern or Sydney side, and much richer in agricultural capabilities. On this coast, however, the harbors are not so good, and the facilities for transportation are wanting. A railroad is the crying need of Inverness County. Various companies have been chartered, from time to time, to construct railways here, but this far none has succeeded. The Governments of the Dominion, of the Province, and of the Municipality have signified their willingness to aid the construction of railways here with very liberal subsidies. The county has shown a most commendable public spirit in the notable generosity of its proffered assistance to these necessary undertakings. If the Inverness and Richmond Railway Company will be able to complete successfully its projected road from the Strait of Canso to Cheticamp, the evolution of the next ten years in Inverness will be a very marked one. Will this road pay? I answer without fear that it will pay. For the first few years it may not be a paying concern, taken by itself; but after that I venture to think it would, under prudent management, yield a handsome and increasing annual dividend. We have everything to offer a railway that any country has; we have the products of the farm, the products of the forest, the products of the mine, and the products of the sea. Owing to the absence of first-class harbors on the coast nearly all our exports and imports would be carried by rail. In a country of such varied resources as this a railway would open up numerous avenues of trade of which we are now unaware. We have, therefore, no reason to doubt that a railway in this county would be a satisfying financial success.

On the Inverness coast splendid deposits of coal have been discovered, opened up and practically tested, at Port Hood, Mabou, Broad Cove, St. Rose, and Chimney Corner. These mines are about 15 miles apart. In all of them the quality of the coal is pronounced superior, and it is fairly correct to say that the quantity is apparently without limit. The mine at Broad Cove is in a fair way to become widely known in the hands of the Broad Cove Coal Company — a corporation of demonstrated strength and character. Vigorous work has been done there during the past three years. The mine is now in a condition to turn out 2000 tons a day easily, and the opening of the harbor adjacent thereto is in an advanced state of progress. The signal success of this enterprise is now positively assured. I have no manner of doubt but this mine is destined to become, and that soon, one of the most famous and desirable coal properties in Canada. What I said of the relations that should exist between the people of Cape Breton County and Mr. Whitney, applies equally to the people of Inverness and the manager of the Broad Cove Coal Company. No foreigners ever started an enterprise in this county that deserves the cordial co-operation of our people more than do our honest, hustling, hardworking friend William Penn Hussey, and his associates in the Broad Cove Coal Company.

Altogether, Cape Breton Island holds out many practicable opportunities for men of mind, means and ambition, who wish to leave on the pages of history the glowing impress of a great idea. But we must bring such men to us. We must help and appreciate our own country, if we expect others to do so. We must advertise, and keep advertising, the character and immensity of Nature's gifts to our land. Otherwise these bounteous veins of dormant wealth which were intended for our practical comfort and benefit will continue to remain, as they have already too long remained, like "painted ships on a painted ocean."

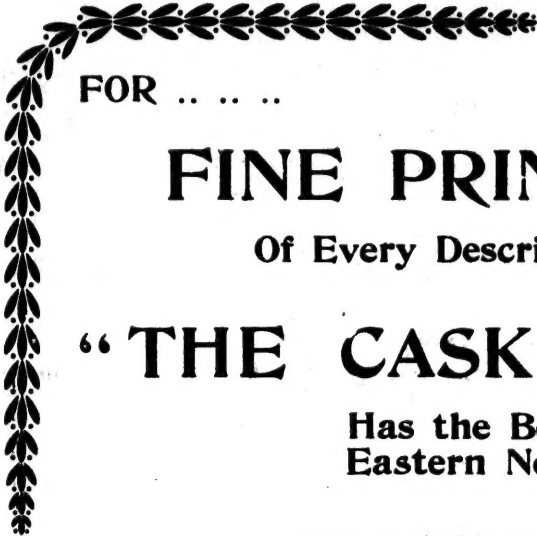
Let us therefore take hope for the future, work together for the uplifting of the land of our birth, and make an end of repining and running down the country. All histories, ancient and modern, teach the one inspiring lesson, namely, that every nation is made or unmade by the qualities of its people. Not extent of territory, not the commanding force of numbers, not the peculiarities of soil or climate, or yet the hunted riches of the earth, are the highest guarantees of genuine greatness. Industry, honesty, intelligence, patriotism, and a Christian elevation of the public soul — these be the sponsors of a country's living fame.

Attest it, ye sons of the hills and the heather! — sons of the valiant and true! You may tell me that our hopes have been slow of realization; that improvements have been long a-coming. Granted. The strongest and best of us often feel borne down by the probability that we may never see the actual fruition of our hopes and efforts. That should not deter us from doing our duty. What should be thought of a farmer who would refuse to sow any seed in the spring from fear that he would die before the harvest. We are all in God's hands; and we do not live for ourselves alone. We must have a thought and a care for others. The spirit of our fathers speaks out to us still, and common justice demands that we should, at least, endeavor to pay to posterity what we owe to our ancestors.

I have done. The length of my paper has tired you. For this, be pleased to accept my apology in the words and spirit of the Roman orator:

“ Who is here so vile that will not love his country?
If any speak: for him have I offended.”

J. L. McDOUGALL.



FOR

FINE PRINTING

Of Every Description.

“THE CASKET”

Has the Best Facilities in
Eastern Nova Scotia. . . .



FINE COMMERCIAL PRINTING,
FINE SOCIAL PRINTING,
PAMPHLETS, CATALOGUES,
ENTERTAINMENT NOTICES, PROGRAMS, ETC.,
PICNIC AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS,
CHURCH PRINTING,
SOCIETY CARDS, BY-LAWS, ETC.



Send to us for your Account Forms,
Printed Writing Paper, or any
other article of printing
you may require.



“THE CASKET,”

Antigonish, N. S.

